

THE COLUMBIAN OBSERVER.

A JOURNAL OF
LITERATURE AND POLITICS.

"The task of an author is, either to teach what is not known or to recommend known truths by his manner of adorning them."

Dr Johnson.

"Citizens by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of AMERICAN, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism."

Washington's Farewell Letter.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 1822.

No. 13.

ORIGINAL BIOGRAPHY.

GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON.

(Continued from page 82.)

In the interval between the attacks of the British, neither army had much leisure or disposition to be idle. The British were unremittingly engaged in strengthening their force, by the transportation of heavy ordnance from their fleet to their camp; and were daily receiving strong reinforcements both of men and munitions. Nor was Jackson less perseveringly active, in giving firmness to our intrenchments; inspiring confidence to the valour of our militia, and making such a disposition of our forces, as would effectually defeat the most desperate attempt on the part of Sir Edward Pakenham, to penetrate our lines.

The dawn of the first of January, was ushered in by an appalling discharge from the heavy artillery of the British, extending the whole length of our intrenchments, from the Mississippi to the Cyprus swamp. The glare of rockets, the explosion of bombs, and the deafening roar of cannon, was awfully sublime; and when we called to mind, the ancient renown of our enemy in arms, his invincible prowess, his military glory, and unshorn laurels, when we considered that even the soaring Eagles of France, and the greatest Captain and Victor in the world, had cowered beneath the fury of the British Lion:—a sensation of awful uncertainty was felt for the final issue of the conflict. True, we had the consoling reflections of having beaten that triumphant enemy both on sea and on land, to cherish and inspire us with hope and confidence. And that assurance did animate us with dauntless confidence. To Jackson and his host of patriots, however, the roaring of the British Lion carried no terror in its sounds; but was speedily drowned in the peals of our cannon, that vomited flames from their hundred mouths. These intermingled with our rifles and musquetry, formed the winged messengers of death to our foes. The battle continued to rage till dark, when the British, tired of the conflict retired to their lines, with what loss is not precisely known; but from the usual disparity, it must have been considerable, ours being—in killed 11, and wounded 23.

Their next attempt, which proved equally abortive, was to turn the left wing of Jackson's army. To accomplish this, they erected a battery in the night, on the edge of

the swamp, which formed the extreme of our left. A thick fog favoured their design the ensuing day; but when the Sun had dispersed the mist, they discovered the intrenchments of Jackson extended 300 yards into the swamp, and so far beyond their battery. General Coffee and his Tennessee volunteers opened a brisk fire upon their battery, which was soon destroyed, while the British retreated with precipitation, to their lines, covered with chagrin and disappointment in being so repeatedly foiled in assailing what they termed an undisciplined and rabble militia.

To appreciate fully, the talents displayed by Jackson, in the siege of Orleans, and to estimate justly the measure of glory, to which he is entitled, we must consider the small efficient force placed at his disposal; the limited extent of his resources; the immense power of his enemy, and the disaffection that prevailed among the foreigners under his command. Nothing, in fact, but that all-inspiring, and all-predominant spirit, which animated Jackson, and which he could so readily infuse into his troops, gave strength to his position, and efficiency to his forces. The man was in himself a tower of strength, and to the man, rather than the army, are we principally indebted for that immortal victory, and the safety of Louisiana.

Of the truth of this assertion, the failure of the troops on the opposite or right bank of the river, under General Morgan, is more than sufficient proof; for notwithstanding the incompetency and weakness of that officer, the forces under his command should have assured a victory against a handful of British assailants. But the name and spirit of Jackson was wanting in the camp, and defeat was the consequence.

From the action of the 1st. to the 8th. of January, a portentous inactivity and silence reigned between the armies. It was the interval of preparation; the stillness that precedes the storm, when in dark and awful majesty, the pregnant clouds armed with the fire of consuming wrath, march on in slow and noiseless terror, till their concentrated horrors burst with unexpected destruction upon the earth. Previous to the 8th. of January, strong reinforcements had been received by General Pakenham, till he was enabled to muster before New-Orleans an effective army of 14,000 men. General Jackson had likewise been joined by an unarmed body of Kentucky troops amounting to 2300; so that as he observed, it was an increase of numbers, without an augmentation of strength.

On the 6th and 7th of January, the activity of the British in making preparations to attack Jackson, in his intrenchments, on both sides of the Mississippi at the same time, became visible even in the American camp, and was fully confirmed by the intelligence of deserters from their army. With great labour, they completed a channel for their boats, on the night of the 7th, so as to allow of the transportation of their troops to the right bank of the river. Apprehending the accomplishment of this undertaking, but unable to obstruct or defeat it, by an open field attack, General Jackson waited quietly in his intrenchments for their approach; and to strengthen General Morgan on the right bank, reinforced him on the 6th with a strong detachment of the Louisiana Militia, and Kentucky troops. Commodore Patterson commanded the strong batteries on the right bank of the river; and a partial breast-work not quite extending to the wood, secured the lines in the same manner as in Jackson's camp. Thus situated, with the cool and collected bravery of veterans, did the American army, await the storm, that momentarily threatened to break upon them.

At the earliest streak of dawn, on the morning of the 8th of January, while every object was yet obscured in darkness, the British began the attack, by a tremendous discharge of bombs and Congreve rockets; advancing their columns upon the right and left, to storm the American intrenchments. The troops of Jackson received them with the intrepid firmness and cool deliberation characteristic of their commander; and immediately opened upon them, from their lines and intrenchments a destructive and deadly fire of cannon and musketry. Never was the roar of arms more appalling, or the fire of a soldiery more fatal. The rifle and the musket of our militia were not less sure and deadly, than the well directed fire of the artillery. Whole ranks of the enemy were mowed down, in a moment, by our raw militia, who dealt death and havoc in security, behind their intrenchments. The firmness and courage of the British, however, extorted admiration from our troops even in the rage of the battle. On the left, twice were their slaughtered columns repulsed by the gallant Generals Carroll, Coffee, and the Kentucky Militia, and twice did they return to the charge, and renew the assault. But even courage and desperation were equally fruitless, opposed to the unerring fire that was vomited, without intermission from our lines. Their scaling ladders and facines fell useless from the nerveless hands of the dying soldiers, till at length, literally cut to pieces, some fled in confusion from the field, which they left strewn with their wounded, dying, and slaughtered companions, while others were glad to surrender themselves prisoners to their victorious, but merciful foes. Jackson in the midst of danger, was every where seen, giving encouragement and animation to his troops, and dealing deadly discomfiture on his foes.

On the right, although our troops at first yielded for a moment, to the fierce assault of the British, yet they as quickly recovered from their confusion, to redouble the fury of their fire. A British Colonel here succeeded in mounting the intrenchments, but scarce had he waved his hand in token of success, when half a score of bullets at the same instant pierced his brain, from the rifles of our troops. Here too, the enemy dreadfully slaughtered, fled

in confusion. To pursue them now, was to assure their entire and inevitable destruction; but the hope no sooner beamed upon Jackson, than the clouds of defeat, from the opposite side of the river, arose to obscure it. Upon the first approach of the British upon "Morgan's camp, the Kentucky reinforcements, as if struck by panic, ingloriously fled from the conflict, drawing after them by their example," the whole remainder of the army. Thus the British became possessed of a strongly intrenched camp, and the formidable battery before commanded by Com. Patterson; and a position every way calculated to annoy Jackson, and which, if retained, must in all probability have eventually put them in possession of New-Orleans, that great commercial emporium of Western America.

A fortunate clause, however, which Jackson stipulated in the terms, agreed upon with the British, to enable them to provide for their wounded and bury their dead; dislodged the enemy from this strong position, without the risk of a battle, or the effusion of blood. The basis of this truce was, "that although hostilities should cease on *this* (Jackson's) side of the river until 12 o'clock of this day, (9th) yet it was not to be understood, that they should cease on the *other side*; but that no reinforcements should be sent across by *either* army, until the expiration of that day." This proposition appeared of so pregnant a character to Gen. Lambert, the surviving commanding officer, that he begged time to consider it until 10 o'clock of the 9th; and in the interval, under the dispiriting circumstances of his great defeat, he thought proper to re-cross his troops, and evacuating his advantageous position, concentrated his shattered and diminished forces.

In this action, the British lost 3000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners; whilst on the side of Jackson but 7 were killed and 6 wounded! A disparity of loss, which though marvellous is still true, and easily accounted for. Sir Edward Packingham was shot dead from his horse, early in the action; and Generals Keame and Gibbs, were wounded, the former mortally, the latter so much, as to insure him but a languishing existence. Major General Lambert was now left in command of the British forces; which still, however, presented a formidable power, far superior in numbers to the American army.

Let us here pause a moment, and recall to recollection that sad train of disastrous afflictions, which, from generation to generation, had been visited upon the family of Jackson, by the barbarous cruelty of British oppression. His grandfather butchered—his father exiled—his mother tortured into a broken heart—his too brothers, like his grandfather, assassinated by English myrmidons. Behold the just retribution, without a motive of revenge, or a feeling of malignity! Hannibal at Cannæ! could not have felt the throb of greater satisfaction beat in his exulting bosom, than now swelled the soul of Jackson, at the recollection of his broken-hearted mother, and all his slaughtered kindred! How mysterious are the ways of heaven! Think and pause—yet think, deluded England, upon the giants of wrath, thy fell cruelty is now nurturing in thy bosom—and before the hour has passed away forever, arrest the explosion that must ere long trail thy plumes of royalty in the dust of humiliation.—*Ireland!* At that name alone how many Jacksons start into being, dread ministers of *Retribution!*

Having immediately re-occupied the camp, evacuated by the enemy on the west bank of the River, no further hostilities ensued between the two armies. The British were chiefly employed in burying the dead, and giving succour to their wounded: Jackson in confirming the strength of his intrenchments, and doing all that became a Commander, who never was surprised in the midst of victory, though always victorious.

On the night of the 18th of January the British army decamped from their position, and retreated to their boats on lake Borge; leaving two officers and seventy-eight wounded privates, together with 14 pieces of heavy artillery and a considerable quantity of shot, in possession of the Americans. General Jackson, from the most humane as well as politic motives, allowed them to accomplish their retreat unmolested. Indeed, the insurmountable obstacles which the face of the country threw in the way of a successful pursuit, were not more powerful dissuatives against any attempt to cut off their retreat, than that deep and feeling sense of humanity, which at all times characterized this illustrious chief, and prompted him to spare the effusion of human blood, even when it flowed from the hearts of his enemies. As far, however, as the safety of his own army permitted him to annoy the hereditary enemy of his name and Nation, he did not relax in the means, which he had power to employ. Except the time of Truce, no repose had been given to the enemy, from our artillery and batteries on both sides of the river; which continued to play upon them, with unceasing briskness to the very hour of their retreat; and which doubtless induced them to conclude, in the words of General Jackson's despatch, "that it was quite time to quit a position in which so little rest could be found."

Thus were the British invaders driven from our shores by General Jackson, covered with *Defeat and Shame*, instead of enjoying the savage repast, so diabolically promised by their countersign of *Beauty and Booty*. Thus was the flower of Wellington's veterans, plunged in disgrace and humiliation, by the prisoner—youth, who in the *Revolution*, had scorned to wipe the dust from the boots of an English Dragoon! Who can behold the identity of the same dauntless spirit, now blazing in the beams of glory without admiration and applause! The heroic boy was now the resistless general, victorious over the same foes!—Other men are renowned for having stood inactive spectators of one battle in the Revolution; they are applauded as heroes and venerated as Patriots. But how shall we praise that man, who in the struggle of '76 for Liberty and Independence, while yet a boy, nobly volunteered in the cause of Freedom, and hazarded his life, when a prisoner, to save the honour of his country. Who not only bled to achieve our Independence, but caused thousands of the enemy to bleed and perish, who had the arrogance to attempt its subversion! The situation, circumstances, and victories of Jackson, bear a closer analogy to those of Washington, than a cursory observer would suppose. They both commanded armies without discipline, and unprovided with the necessary munitions of war. The armies of both were composed of Militia, the yeomen of the country. They were both opposed to veteran and skilful troops, enured to hardships and to battle. Both were men who seemed born to contend against adversity; endued with un-

shaken fortitude and immoveable firmness; great energy but humane hearts; fertile minds, exhaustless resources of invention, and unbending rectitude. Devoted to their country both sacrificed every private interest and consideration to public duty; and both, rather by their invincible spirit, than their forces, vanquished and prostrated their foes. The one achieved the birth of the Republic; the other rescued it from disgrace, defeat and conquest; preserving its freedom, and diffusing its glory beyond all former bounds. Both have always evinced more readiness to retire from public service, than to accept of public honours, or prominent stations. Both live in the hearts of the People, and both are consecrated to immortal renown.

(To be continued.)

THE AUTHOR'S JEWEL.

NO. II.

Vain all your care, vain all your outward pride,
No art the inward man, can ever hide.

It is now some years, since an old and reverend uncle, to whom I was indebted for my education, paid that debt to nature, which no art can evade, or procrastinate beyond the period of its maturity.—My uncle, was passionately devoted, in the latter days of his existence, to what has been thought characteristic of old age—*narrative*. Among the stories, which I remember he took peculiar delight in repeating, was that of a Colonial officer in the Militia; whose real rank was that of a Colonel, but who always took especial care, to entitle himself General—General Drumfield. But I am anticipating a part of my story, which will more properly come in place, hereafter.

The time, was about ten years prior to the Revolutionary War; when the Coffee-House and Exchange of this renowned city, was located in the antique structure, which now stands at the south-west corner of Front and High-street. This was the usual resort at that period, for all the great men of the day; as Kitchen's is now for those of the present. It was the favourite and particular resort of the famous General, to whom my story alludes. Here would he spend many a joyous hour, over the curling clouds of his pipe; occasionally refreshed by his mug of cider. Cigars were little used, in those days; and the General seldom touched his pipe, but he indulged at the same time, in one of those musical and refreshing visions, which abandon the head to the force of gravity, and gives *audible* indications of having ascended from this ball of earth, to a happier sphere. It was unhappily the lot of General Drumfield to be a man of Fortune and of leisure; and he rarely took one pipe, but he longed to take a whiff of the second, and then of the third. But he neither smoked, nor drank in silence; he was a hero, a man of spirit, and a Patriot; or at least passed for such, till the changes of the time gradually eventuated in the Revolution, and disclosed his real character.

I think I see the general standing before me now, as he was described to me, by my uncle Halloway.—Dressed in his long-waisted coat, whose expansive skirts met in front, ornamented with huge buttons located upon each hip bone, and amply supplied with folds; he afforded a figure, both dignified and respectful; notwithstanding the smallness of his stature, and its resemblance to the grotesque. His wig was large and well powdered; his shoes

of the same generous fashion, ample and ponderous, with silver buckles of proportionate dimensions. He wore a little cocked-hat, and a sword by his side; the former giving him a fierce and martial air, by being inclined to an angle of defiance. Thus attired, keeping tune with his gold headed cane, as he marched forward, erect as if at the head of a company; all was bustle and attention, as soon as the General entered the Coffee-House, at his usual hour, of ten in the morning. "Well General, good morning, Colonel, what news, what news," came from half a dozen, or a score of dandies and idlers at the same time. Drumfield had made it a rule never to answer a man who called him Colonel; but to those who styled him General, he was ever courteous, affable, and loquacious. "The news, gentlemen, is, I am sorry to say it, that there is no War! The world is losing its spirit; it lacks courage; priestcraft will ruin, debase and enslave us."—"No war, General, why the Indians are scalping our people, within sixty miles of our capital!" answered a little satirical fellow, in a black jacket, and yellow leather breeches, who was a wealthy skin-dresser.—"War with savages, sir; aye, but what gentleman, or *man of family*, would fight with savages? Sir, my mother was the daughter of a General, under *William and Mary*; and knighted by the sainted Queen Anne! Civilized war, sir, is the war *for gentlemen*. Now, sir, I should like to have a cut or two at the *French*."—"There was a certain *bow-wow* way of speaking, peculiar to the Colonel, which made his words go a great way, when his reason might have fallen short.—His manner of speaking, was perfectly *Johnsonian*.

"If a man has courage, said the skin-dresser, I think he may show it as well, against *Savages*; aye, and more so, than in killing his own civil and polite fellow-men."—"Your remark proves you but half-civilized sir, said the Colonel.—For example, I march out to give battle to the savages. Well! We have a forest on each side of us. Well!—The savages lie concealed in the bushes! very well.—They aim at the officers, and we all fall dead!—Well! We have not forgotten Braddock's defeat.—Well.—Now see the gentlemanly nature of civilized war, by the contrast.—A civilized enemy gives you an open field, and broad day light. The two armies approach. They squint at one another, at a long shot. The commanders are polite men; men of family; and often prefer a retreat to a battle. Well! They reconnoitre; they draw out in order of battle—the officers are snug; the distance is respectable; a few of the file are killed, a few wounded; those who cant stand, retreat—the brave have the victory and live to enjoy their laurels. Now, sir, this is civil and honourable, as it ought to be. Give me civil war, sir!"—"God forbid! cried a little merchant, who that moment entered; I think we have enough to do with the savages." The General looked on him with a smile of compassion for what he conceived to be his ignorance; lit his pipe for a third time and resumed his discourse, that "it was a great pity, there was no war! no decent, civilized war!"

"It was the most amusing sight in the world, said my uncle, to see the colonel, marching and strutting up and down, in front of the Coffee House; ejaculating his prayers to Mars, for a war, *suited to a man of family*. Such a war, as General Drumfield might serve in, without contaminating his blood, by having it mixed with the base earth he trod on."

War with the *French* at last came, like the messenger of bliss, to a tortured sinner. Now was the colonel to reap his harvest of glory, in battle with the most polite and civil people, upon earth.—The colonel had filled his second pipe that morning, when the little skin dresser, rushed into the Coffee House, nearly out of breath! "General, general, general, I give you joy; I give you joy! You are made, you are immortal! Now general, now!"—"Sainted Queen Anne! what could have happened, cried the general. Some good fortune, say you! out with it, sir; delay not my raptures; come we'll have an extra mug of cider!"—"War! war! war! cried the little skin-dresser! Now, general, you shall have a cut or two at the *French*!" The countenance of the colonel, at these words, evidently fell to the peace posture; and his pipe, rested with one end on the table, till it gradually went out. But the colonel had appearances to keep up.—"War, say you; and with the *French* too! wonder fulby the sainted Queen Anne! I rejoice, sir, I have now an opportunity to show the valour of a man of family, in the defence of his country. But still my heart bleeds, for the widows and the orphans, it will cast upon the world."

"We shall have all the savages of the north upon our backs, said the little merchant; let loose by these cursed *French*!"

The countenance of the general brightened; he raised his pipe to his mouth, and drew his sword from between his legs, with a very military air!—"It is a pity, such a polite people, should employ savages, said he; as it prevents men of family, and standing, from fighting the battles of the country. It convinces me, sir, that extreme civility borders upon barbarism.—Now, sir, I had myself intended to have had a cut or two at these *French*. But where is your security for barbarous treatment, if they employ savages?" Thus the general once more bought off his services; and during the war, preserved the dignified ease of his corner and his pipe, in the high street Coffee House, unmolested by the ferocity of the savages, or the extreme politeness of the *French*!

The general, alias colonel, was fortunately for himself, a *single man*; this he always called himself, despising, as he did in his heart, the vulgar epithet of *old bachelor*. He dined at the high-street Coffee House; and took his tea and his breakfast, with his landlady, at his lodgings. In the summer afternoons, it was his custom, to stroll through the woods, which then extended from eight street to the centre square, with *Ovid's love* in his *hand*, and a volume on military discipline, in his *pocket*.

The time at length arrived, which was to test the courage of General Drumfield; the time which *tried men's souls*; which sent the foes of liberty into exile; its friends and patriots to the tomb, and exalted its successful champions, to imperishable and brilliant renown.—It was now the eve of the Revolution. The eloquence of *Henry*, had struck on the nerve of every friend to Liberty; while the oppressions and tyranny of the British, had roused even those disposed to be slaves, to indignation and resistance! The general was at *tea* with his landlady, when he first learned the famous exploit of the friends of Liberty at Boston upon that baneful *herb*, the source at once of war and scandal!—The cup and saucer rattled in his trembling hand as he raised them to his lips. "His majesty will never

bear it, cried the general, between a sigh and a sob. It is unpardonable. Yet it is surely a savage practice to shed blood, for a cup of tea!"—But his landlady was of a different opinion; declaring, that "if there was any thing in the world, worth fighting for, it was a good cup of tea!"

The general was an hour later, the next morning, in appearing upon 'change!—He had passed a restless night. His wig leaned too much on one side. He left home, without his sword; and one of his knee-buckles hung loose!—His very appearance was ominous of discord, and civil war.—"Well colonel, exclaimed the little merchant, you wanted a civil war, and now, I fear, you will have it."—"I hope not against the king's authority, said the general. His majesty is the fountain of honour, titles, and noble blood! We should have no genteel generals, no men of family without the king."

The words of Drumfield were never forgotten. The storm of the Revolution came. Parties raged with violence; and the *tories* were menaced with persecution. But the whole merit of terrifying General Drumfield out of the country, by the force of a joke, belonged to the skin dresser; who so impressed his mind, with the horrors of a coat of tar and feathers, that he began to waste in flesh; and gradually dropt every sign and decoration, which marked him for an officer of *his majesty*!—At last, wearied out both in body and mind, the valiant Militia General, sought a hasty refuge, in *his majesty's* dominions; leaving a trunk of papers behind him in his lodgings, among which a letter was discovered, which gave intelligence, that the father of this celebrated gentleman soldier, was transported to America, for picking the pockets of his civilized fellow subjects.

Among his papers, many curious letters, and interesting documents were discovered; among which I am happy to say, are his *epistles to his mistress*; who crossed him in love; and enough other matter, to furnish out many interesting narratives, for the improvement and edification of the present plebeian generation.

LIFE OF ARMSTRONG.

(Continued from page 85.)

These letters, as may well be supposed, gave great offence to Dr. Armstrong.

On the 7th of April, he called on Mr. Wilkes, at his house, and accused him of being the author of this attack on his character, in very abrupt terms.

In the Gentleman's Magazine for 1792, the substance of this conversation, as minuted down (apparently by Mr. Wilkes) immediately after it took place, is preserved, and it is curious.

Mr. Wilkes, in being charged with the attack, observed that he had been roughly treated in the letter signed *Dies*. "Yes," said the Doctor, "but I believe you wrote that on purpose to bring on the controversy—I am almost sure of it." Wilkes refused to answer interrogatories, and referred the Doctor to Mr. Woodfall, the printer.

Dr. A.—"Whoever has abused me, sir, is a villain; and your endeavours, sir, to set Scotland and England together, are very bad."

Mr. Wilkes remarked, that the Scots had done that, thoroughly, by their own conduct: said that he had never attacked the Doctor personally, but on the contrary had complimented him in conjunction with Churchill, in his mock *Dedication to Mortimer*. He appealed to the Doctor, if he had not himself inveighed against Scotland, in the severest terms?

The Doctor answered, "I only did it in joke, sir; you did it in bitterness: besides, it was my country."

After some further conversation, Dr. A. observed, "I was happier with you than any man in the world for a great many years, and complimented you not a little in the *Day*."

Mr. W.—"I am abused, in *Dies*, for that publication, and for the manner of it, both which you approved."

Dr. A.—"I did so."

Mr. W.—"I was abused at first, I am told, in the manuscript of *Dies*, for having sold the copy, and put the money in my pocket, but that charge was suppressed in the printed letter."

Dr. A.—"I know nothing of that."

The interview then terminated, without further explanation.

There are two things of which no person will, probably, have any doubt, after perusing these singular proceedings: first, that Wilkes was really, as Armstrong affirmed, the author of the whole of the correspondence in the Public Advertiser, and attacked himself, in order to furnish some sort of apology for betraying his former friend; and second, that the story told in that correspondence, about Armstrong's privy to the publication of "*Day*," is the true one. The whole of the little plot has the marks of Wilkes's finesse about it, nor is it possible to assign any motive which could induce Armstrong to start a controversy, that was so sure to end to his own disadvantage. When the charge is advanced he does not attempt to deny it—he is angry because he cannot; he goes to complain, but obtains no satisfaction; and then sits down in silence under the exposure.

The deception disclosed was, after all, of a very venial description; and Armstrong, though he had reason to feel deeply hurt at the artifice and treachery of Wilkes, had none to be ashamed of the part he had himself acted in this transaction.

Dr. Armstrong died at his house in Russel-street, Covent-garden, on the 7th September, 1779; and, to the surprise of his friends, who thought him poor, left behind him more than three thousand pounds, saved out of a very moderate income.

The character of Armstrong seems, on the whole, to have been of an amiable, though somewhat splenetic cast. By his friends, among whom he numbered some of the ablest and worthiest men of his time.—Thomson, Granger, Theobald, Birch, Mead, Sir John Pringle, &c. he was much respected and esteemed. Several of them have borne strong testimony to the goodness of his heart, and general sincerity of his conduct.—He was blunt in his manners, and not very choice in his conversational language; but these asperities were quickly forgot in the liveliness of observation and dry humour with which they were accompanied. He is said to have been indolent and inactive, and fonder, at all times, of making one of a social party of literary friends, than of attending any serious occupation; and to this, perhaps, as much as to that "distempered excess of sensibility," of which he talks in his Commentaries, we may ascribe the little success he experienced in his profession. In Dr. Birch's papers* there is a Tavern invitation from Armstrong to the Doctor, which, as illustrating the personal habits of some of the literati of those days, is curious. The following is a copy.

DEAR SIR,

If you are to be at leisure next Friday, Mr. Spence† and I shall be glad to meet you about two at Richard's Coffee-house, within Temple-bar, from whence we shall adjourn to any Tavern you please, to dine together. If Friday is not convenient for you, please leave word at the bar here: at meeting we shall agree upon some day next week. I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most humble and obliged servant,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

* *Rawthwell's*,‡

Wednesday Evening,

October 6, 1742."

With the author of the Seasons, Dr. Armstrong was from his first coming to London, in the habits of peculiar intimacy; and he is generally understood to have been his coadjutor in the composition of the "*Castle of Indolence*," to both a most congenial subject. The sixty-eighth stanza was entirely written by Armstrong.

The reputation of Armstrong, as a poet, must rest chiefly on his "*Art of Preserving Health*;" but that has merit enough of itself to bear him on the wings of renown through many a distant age. In point of classical elegance, purity, and simplicity of style, as well as truth of sentiment, it is not perhaps excelled by any poem of the Didactic kind, in the English language. The subject was one "unattempted, yet in prose or rhyme."

—the secret wilds, I trace,
Of nature, and with daring steps proceed
Through paths the Muses never trod before.

Book I.

* No. 4300 Birch's papers, British Museum.

† The collector of the anecdotes.

‡ Where was Rawthwell's?

The field was encompassed with difficulties, for though it opened many sources of poetical ideas, still the leading theme was of the most ordinary matters of human existence;—eating, drinking, and sleeping; pain, sickness, and disease; all the infirmities, in short, which flesh is heir to. The skill and imagination which were required to give grace and elevation to such topics as these, could only belong to a mind of the highest order. The task, as Dr. Warton remarks, (in his reflections on Didactic Poetry, prefixed to his Edition of Virgil,) was reserved to Armstrong, and he has executed it nobly.

The author appears throughout to have had Lucretius in his eye; but he has shown himself no servile imitator. If we compare the opening invocation of Hygeia by Armstrong with the invocation of Venus by Lucretius, or both their descriptions of a pestilence we shall be convinced that it was the rivalry of equals. The approach of Hygeia through "the blue serenity of Heaven," and the dispersion of the various baleful forms of disease and death into the loathsome gloom, are conceived and portrayed in the very highest spirit of poetry. The instance of wide wasting pestilence, which Armstrong has selected for a trial of his strength with the Roman poet, in grand and pathetic description, is distinguished by one extremely poetical circumstance. The instance he selects, is that of the sweating sickness, which laid England waste during the reign of the tyrant Richard. It was a notion universally entertained by the common people of that period, that the disease attacked and was fatal to Englishmen alone, and that it was not limited in its rage to England, but extended to Englishmen, wherever Englishmen were to be found throughout the world. A sublimer idea of the avenging power of Heaven over a guilty race, and one more calculated to inspire a deep awe into the mind, it is impossible to imagine. Armstrong appreciated it with a poet's eye, and has availed himself of its agency with very happy effects:

O'er the mournful land,
Th' infected city pour'd her hurrying swarms;
Rous'd by the flames that fir'd her seats around
Th' infected country rush'd into the town.
Some, sad at home, and in the desert some,
Abjur'd the fatal commerce of mankind;
In vain: where'er they fled, the fates pursued;
Others, with hopes more specious, cross'd the main,
To seek protection in far distant skies;
But none they found. It seem'd the general air,
From pole to pole, from Atlas to the East,
Was then at enmity with English blood;
For, but the race of England, all were safe
In foreign climes; nor did this fury taste
The foreign blood which England then contain'd.
Where should they fly? The circumambient Heaven
Involv'd them still, and every breeze was bane.
Where find relief? The salutary art
Was mute; and startled at the new disease,
In fearful whispers hopeless omens gave.
To Heaven with suppliant rites they sent their prayers,
Heaven heard them not. Of every hope depriv'd,
Fatigued with vain resources; and subdu'd
With woes resistless, and enfeebling fear;
Passive they sunk beneath the weighty blow.
Nothing but lamentable sounds was heard;
Nor aught was seen but ghastly views of death.
Infectious horror ran from place to place,
And pale despair. 'Twas all the business then,
To tend the sick, and in their turns to die.
In heaps they fell: and oft one bed, they say,
The sick'ning, dying, and the dead, contain'd.

Armstrong has been reproached with exaggeration in his description of the "moist malignity" and variableness of the English climate, in which all the seasons are said to "mix in every monstrous day." It must be confessed that the picture is overcharged; and perhaps in no part of the work is more exceptionable matter to be found, than in the passages on this subject.

Our fathers talk
Of summers, balmy airs, and skies serene;
Good heaven! For what unexpiated crimes
This dismal change?"

The author here assumes it as a fact, that "a dismal change" in the climate has taken place, when it would have served the purposes of both truth and poetry better, to have corrected a vulgar prejudice, and illustrated that interesting operation of mind, by which "our fathers talk" of the days of their youth, as days when all nature smiled around them.

The brooding elements,
Do they, your powerful ministers of wrath,

Prepare some fierce exterminating plague?
Or is it fix'd in the decrees above
That lofty Albion melt into the main?"

This, it must be confessed, is very genuine bombast.

The colours, in which Dr. Armstrong has painted the English climate, are so greatly exaggerated, as to have sometimes suggested a doubt, whether it was really the English climate which the Doctor had in his mind's eye at the time; that climate so appropriately invoked by his friend and countryman Thomson, by the epithet of "merciful."—Looking into the "Beauties of Scotland," something extremely like a solution of this doubt has presented itself, and which, if correct, will afford a striking example of the influence of early impressions on the mind.

The topographer, describing the banks of the Liddel, Armstrong's native stream, previous to its junction with another river, called the Hermitage, says, "this part of the country is mountainous, high, cold and moist. and lies under the thick and solitary gloom of continual fogs."

Let us contrast this with what Armstrong says of England.

Steep'd in continual rains, or with raw fogs

Bedw'd, our seasons droop: incumbent still,

A ponderous heaven overwhelms the sinking soul.

The descriptions we see are the same, without even a single circumstance of variations. Is it unfair then, to conclude that they were derived from the same source, and that when Armstrong thought he was describing England, he was only recording his recollections of the scenery of his youth?

(Concluded.)

THE SAYINGS OF AN OBSERVER.

A MAN should never marry his mistress, because the mere title of *Wife* will never restore a self-degraded woman to the conscious dignity of virtue; and as she is not so apt to feel this want of elevated consciousness whilst she is his mistress, matrimony can only irritate her passions, to wreak vengeance on him for a sense of inferiority, which nothing can remove. As a Mistress, she does not look for the respect of a wife; but when a wife, she is distracted at meeting with the scorn and contempt due only to a mistress.—The same reason should deter men from legitimating natural children.

If virtue was not held in respect by the majority of mankind, it would be termed vice; and the Saint would pine like the profligate, in the solitary infliction of self rebuke. So much are social opinions, influenced by the sentiments and feelings of those around us. Hence the elegant and refined vices of courts, kings, and the nobility of despotic countries, in whose circle accomplished crime contributes to form excellence of character.

Where two parties equally interested, dispute a question, is it just, or reasonable, that one should always be the *umpire*, and always decide in *its own favour*?—Yet such is the monstrous doctrine assumed by the *Federal Government*, in imposing Fetters upon the *States*.

Men who become *notorious* for their public charities, are too apt to lose the equipoise of judgment, by ascribing their reputation to themselves instead of their *actions as agents*. The dispenser of public charity is but a public agent, whose sole merit is *gratuitous service*. If he becomes overweening in his pride and arrogance, the public may soon strip him of his fancied plumes, by agreeing to pay him. Then he becomes a *mercenary*; and his notoriety is lost in the value of his stipend. All directors of public charities should either be *salary officers*—or—modest and intelligent men. A purse-proud Coxcomb, never should be the leader in a great public benefaction.

Men of opulence lose a foretaste of Heaven, who neglect the patronage of Genius. A brilliant, creative, and eccentric mind, whose fancy is vivid and excursive, is an ever teeming volume of amusement and knowledge, to a cultivated taste, capable of appreciating his character. It is well, however, for mankind, that the rich are too sensual to patronize genius, and that men of genius are too irascible to be sported with, and too independent to be enslaved.

Common understandings, who presume to judge of the actions and sentiments, of such transcendent mortals as *Byron, Shakespear, Chatterton, Hume, Rousseau, and others of the same stupendous stamp*, can only be compared to ants, measuring the altitude of the Egyptian pyramids.

Thirty or forty years ago, the domestics of Philadelphia were proud to appear in plain homespun garments, even on a Sunday. Now Can-

ton craze is too common for the women, unless it is *figured*; and serving men, if not black, would be taken for the blood dandies, the young Patricians of the city. A more emphatic commentary upon our degeneracy and vice, could not be written. If this is the progress of Luxury, what will our *republican simplicity* be, fifty years hence?

In old times, a half a dozen friends to tea at five o'clock in the afternoon, was thought a great party. What is the *contrast* now? Three hundred, to come at 9, and break up at 3, with Dancing, Cards, and every prodigal luxury, is the wretched *contrast*.—

It requires something more than being at the head of a church, and what they call being a public character, to prove a man to possess a *good heart*. One of the most malicious, revengeful, and envious men, that ever turned an *abortive* understanding to the service of the church, is *notorious* for his *peace making* temper, his external piety, his gentility, and his *usefulness*! You might pull him by the nose, and he would not *resent it*—but he would hate you with bitterness, persecute you secretly to the end of time—and—be sure to take the Sacrament; and *profess—to forgive his enemies*.—

It is not often that soldiers turn pious; but when they do, we may observe, that their valour is that of a priest, and their religion that of a soldier.

Never trust the man, who professes to reconcile opposite parties, and to agree a *little* with *all sides*. Where truth and virtue are at stake, the *Olive Branch* is but a cloak for hypocrisy. In politics especially, he who shuns the responsibility of a party man, aims only to plunder and deceive *all parties*.—

Anger and impetuosity of temper, are the twin sisters of Mania. Authors of this temperament should not be allowed to go at large in a community of—*Critics*. I have seen such a one foam at the mouth, and dance like St. Vitus, at having his *grammar* criticised! One contradiction would have sent him in convulsions to heaven.

Women are never known to those whom they wish to please. Hence *lovers* are always ignorant of the *temper* of their mistresses. It is impossible to excite them to reveal their real disposition, before they think proper to disgust you by the deformity.—Men, therefore, must always marry at a venture; and of course, must more frequently draw blanks than prizes.

Men who would never become celebrated for their talents, are often well known for their crimes; and a bad action to some persons, well improved, is often the commencement of their good fortune, as it gives them occasion to become *notorious*. To be the tenant of a Jail, has often proved the epocha of a *great family*.—

The great vice of the *Jesuits*, was the ductility of the *moral principle*. Although, as a society they are no longer formidable, their tenets, discipline, and maxims will never die, because they are instruments necessary to the art of hypocrisy. We have public characters and journalists in Philadelphia who act, without concealment, on the principles of the *Jesuits*, and make *virtue* a plant of times, seasons, and circumstances!—

An aristocratic adhesion to *families*, in a republican community, is the grossest insult which can be offered to the understandings of a free people. In a man of sense, it appears ridiculous;—in an old woman excusable; but in an editor of a paper, it is fulsome, servile, and degrading.

When a burglar is convicted at the Quarter Sessions, the *Jesuit* Editor pronounces him *excusable*, on account of the—great respectability of his family. *A crime is a virtue—in—a decent man!*—

It is found that none pay so servile a deference to rank and family, as those who have been bred in obscurity, and risen *one degree* above their original vulgarity.

Adulation to the rich, is always debasing in an author, unless he is, what authors seldom are—*independent in fortune*, because mankind justly infer, that the flattery is bestowed for the sake of the *recompense*.—

Philanthropists have been invariably unfortunate in their *biographies*; as if goodness alone, unattended by the splendid attributes of genius, was too little esteemed to incite great minds to narrate its history. In American Literature, I know of but one philanthropist, whose biography has been given to the world, and that is so wretchedly com-

ed, as to leave no inducements to benevolence, on the score of fame. It is really to be lamented, that where the heart is notoriously good, the head should be—deplorably weak!

We are apt to over-estimate the good feelings that prompt men to project and support *public charities*. Exclusive benevolence is not a terrestrial quality. We must be content to rear the edifice of humanity on the passions of vanity, pride, and the lust of fame. To do good, and to conceal it, is not the characteristic of mortals. The best men have aimed at *immortality*, not the happiness of the species. The object, however, when not *skilfully concealed* is seldom accomplished.

POLITICAL.

MR. MONROE—AND INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS.

ECCENTRICITY of character, and singularity of opinion, too often occurs among mankind to excite astonishment; but it is seldom that we meet with that affectation of paradox, and peculiar humour which prevails among private individuals, in great public characters, or eminent statesmen. Great singularity or great genius, are alone remarkable for paradox, and a contradiction of the common sentiments of men; when we meet with it in such persons, we are not surprised. In the case of the great genius, we see it supported by a beautiful and subtle theory; and in that of the eccentric man, we are content to receive his dogmatical asseveration in support of his opinion.

But when a public officer, never remarkable for intellect, or eccentricity; and not endowed with a greater share of genius, than falls to the lot of every man in society, bursts suddenly upon the world, with a paradoxical position, not only nugatory and absurd in its terms, but of pernicious influence upon the dearest rights and interests of the country, what must be the conclusion of every rational and impartial mind? Our first enquiry is directed to the state of this intellect. Is he in a state of perfect mental sanity? Is he a man of vigorous judgment, and powerful understanding? Is he old and in his dotage? Or, is he by nature, feeble in intellect, or deficient in the general stamina of his faculties? Is his paradoxical position of benefit to the country? No. It is pernicious. Has he made out his opinion by a sound or plausible theory?—No—He has bewildered himself in ridiculous arguments, in vain striving to prove a *negative*, that has no existence!—Is he a man of extraordinary genius? No—Or if he is, he has never given a demonstration of it by a corresponding action.—The conclusion then is irresistible—He has stirred up a visionary paradox, which instead of being beneficial, is hurtful to the country. If his position were even true, real patriotism would not have promulgated it; but being false and unutterable, it adds folly to crime. Such a man must be in his dotage; it is the only refuge to save him from imputations of hostility to the union, and enmity to his country.

In the foregoing remarks, it will be perceived that we allude to the diffuse and intricate arguments of Mr. Monroe, to prove, that the constitution has not given Congress the power, to make artificial roads and canals. In touching upon this subject, we feel a considerable degree of compassion, for the imbecility of the *abortive* Statesman, who could thus, in his old age, expose himself to derision and ridicule, for an opinion so repugnant to the obvious features of our Federal Charter, and so diametrically opposite to every prevailing judgment upon the subject. We should consider it as great a perversion of our faculties, and as

criminal an abuse of time, to prove Mr. Monroe wrong, as it was in him, to prove a visionary paradox right. As Mr. Monroe has denied a power never before questioned, and which every *petty corporation* in the country possesses and exercises daily, that power must remain, till he subverts it by countervailing proof. This he has not done, and never can accomplish. The whole nation is against him. All the illustrious statesmen of the Republic are against him. He has no solitary coincidence of opinion, to give countenance to his preposterous proposition. The very *basis* of the confederation denounces the absurdity—THE COMMON DEFENCE AND GENERAL WELFARE—not to mention those attributes of sovereignty, which unfortunately open so wide, the portals of encroaching power. In the opinion of every Republican, the great vice of the Constitution, is that sweeping and unlimited clause, which gives to government the right to do every thing, necessary to carry the powers expressly delegated into effect. If there is a power to declare war, there results of course, a power to construct roads and canals, to expedite and accomplish the ends of that power. And this position, although dangerous to liberty, has been admitted by Mr. Monroe in the case of the *bank*, which is justified as subsidiary to the right to levy and collect revenue—in open contradiction to the refusal of the Federal Convention, to grant the right of *Incorporation*; and in direct opposition to the silence of the Constitution itself.—We mention this much of the argument, merely to show how pliable the mind of Mr. Monroe is, on one point of the Constitution, and how stubborn and perverse he is on another, involving *precisely the same principle*. With this difference too, against him, that the point *he favours*, is pernicious to the liberties and prosperity of the Republic—and that which *he opposes*, is auspicious to our eternal union, our greatest benefit, wealth, happiness, and security.

It is unfortunate for Mr. Monroe, that he has never before distinguished himself either by his actions, or his writings. It is unfortunate, because it has now driven him, in his dotage, to rear a fancied Edifice of Literary Fame, which never can be viewed without laughter and derision; and which, from being equally destitute of beauty, or utility, can never receive a better appellation, than that of his *Folly*. A statesman of his age, descending fast to posterity, without having given any visible, any durable evidence of talent, must we are aware, feel deeply mortified under the reflection; and struggle hard accordingly, to fabricate some tangible evidence of his having *deserved* the high station he holds. This ambition to do something, could have been his only motive, thus to paralyze the progress of internal improvement, during his administration.

Now it is possible, but only possible, and by no means probable, that all the expounders of the Constitution, previous to Mr. Monroe's elaborated dissertation upon a negative, might have been wrong.—It is possible that this point may have been *providentially* reserved for his fame;—but it is equally possible, that he may have been *providentially* destined to this disgrace in his dotage, of giving a ridiculous construction to the Constitution, which disguised under a mountain of words, might pass for profound, but which rightly understood, is in reality puerile.

We could refer to numerous passages in the *Federalist*, were it necessary, as well as draw forth a prolix chain of

reasoning ourselves, to show the futility and weakness of this denial of power to the Union. This, however, as we before observed is not called for, because the proposition denied by Mr. Monroe is one of those obvious and simple provisions, which, to every sagacious and ingenuous mind, carries its own force with it; and appears almost in the light of a self-evident axiom. To confuse and render it mystical is not possible; the question is too simple to yield to the attempt; and no mind but Mr. Monroe's could have entangled itself in the labyrinth, which he has wove about him, in 180 pages Folio!—In fine, we must apply to Mr. Monroe the words of the Poet—

"None but Himself can be his pavallet."

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

WE owe our unfeigned acknowledgements to the particular friend who obliged us with the interesting volume, from which we have made as many selections as our narrow limits would admit. Being already indebted to his activity and zeal, on more occasions than this, we beg he will not omit to confer another and a higher favour, by furnishing original communications for the *Observer*. His genius and learning are competent to all he attempts; and should he think proper, to leave for a moment, the splendour of the science by which he is surrounded, to dally with the Musæ in their roseate bower, our readers would have equal cause with ourselves, to be pleased and delighted.—The time is now not far distant, when his lucubrations upon the favourite theme of his studies and avocations, will be equally welcome with his effusions in the lighter department of the belles-lettres. We feel proud to number him among our correspondents.

Florio is rather too flowery. We admire that boldness of the imagination, which hazards burlesque for the sake of the sublime; but his imagery can neither be termed the one nor the other. The sentiments are pretty and natural. But good lord, sir! turn to the newspapers! They are replete with pretty and natural sentiments; and what is their fate? There is such a thing as oblivion, *even in print*. Vide Pope's *Dunciad*, where you may also find the contrary, that there is sometimes *notoriety* even in dullness.

Arabella is no disguise. A masculine author never wrote so effeminately, nor so pretty. Her mamma was perfectly affectionate in correcting her essay; but we fear her mamma is not the proficient she imagines. We cannot pour forth adulation at the expense of truth, upon so serious and responsible a subject as this; like our old friend, the *founder* of the *Port Folio*; who so frequently gratified the vanity of his *Lady correspondents*, at the sacrifice of sense, taste, fancy, and usefulness. There is a kind of composition, which is too flat to amuse, and too inane to instruct; a sort of a rope of words strung very neatly together, but meaning—*nothing*! Such effusions we must exercise the privilege of consigning to the *shades*.

W. T.'s promise is on record. Let him call to recollection, that he is writing for *Athenian wits*—at the *Athenæum*! that brilliant proof of our claim to the—*title*.

Our obliging and learned correspondent *Eusebius*, will be read with profound interest by all who appreciate knowledge, or delight in profound enquiry; and even those who may dissent from his conclusions, will be constrained to admire the depths of his scientific researches, and the strict logic which governs his reasonings.—We are sorry his communication came too late for this Number.

On the first Saturday in August ensuing, it is the design of the Editors to issue the COLUMBIAN OBSERVER twice a week, on a Super-royal Sheet, at Five Dollars per annum. It will be published on Wednesday and Saturday Evenings.

Subscriptions, and Advertisements on the usual terms, are respectfully solicited, By HICKMAN & HAZZARD, No. 121, Chesnut-